

## Chapter 1

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# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION



U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration  
National Ocean Service

Dear Marine Sanctuary Volunteer:

On behalf of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, I want to personally thank you for donating your time and energy to our nation's marine sanctuary program.

Our marine sanctuaries are equivalent to our national parks. They are special places that deserve to be protected and visited by all. With your support, the sanctuary's research, education and outreach programs can reach a wider audience.

I encourage you to visit all 13 of our marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Our marine sanctuaries encompass deep ocean gardens, near shore coral reefs, whale migration corridors, deep sea canyons, and even underwater archeological sites. They range in size from one-quarter square mile in Fagatele Bay, American Samoa to over 100,000 square miles in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, one of the largest marine protected areas in the world. Together these sanctuaries protect more than 118,000 square miles of ocean waters and habitats.

Again, you are the backbone of our programs. Together we will achieve dynamic, growing system of marine protected areas that future generations will enjoy as much as we do today!

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta  
Director  
National Marine Sanctuary System